

The Role of Emotions in Teacher Agency: A Study of Mexican English Language Educators

El papel de las emociones en la agencia docente: un estudio de educadores de inglés en México

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This exploratory study examines the link between emotions and teacher agency across different geographical contexts. Semi-structured interviews and life stories were used and analyzed through Hargreaves' emotional geography framework. The findings reveal that emotions significantly influence the teachers' ability to manage classroom dynamics and implement positive changes. The research underscores the importance of empathy, ethics, and conflict resolution in building strong student relationships and supportive learning environments. It advocates for integrating emotional intelligence, empathy, and ethical decision-making into language teacher education programs to enhance teacher development and promote more inclusive, effective educational settings.

Keywords: emotional experiences, emotional geographies, language teacher development, teacher agency

Este estudio exploratorio, a partir de entrevistas semiestructuradas e historias de vida, analiza las experiencias emocionales de cinco docentes de inglés en México usando el marco de las geografías emocionales de Hargreaves. Se examina cómo las emociones influyen en la agencia docente en diversos contextos geográficos y su impacto en la gestión del aula y la implementación de cambios positivos. La investigación subraya la importancia de la empatía, la ética y la resolución de conflictos para construir relaciones sólidas con los estudiantes y crear entornos de aprendizaje de apoyo. Se aboga por integrar la inteligencia emocional y la toma de decisiones éticas en la formación docente para promover entornos educativos más inclusivos y efectivos.

Palabras clave: agencia docente, desarrollo docente de idiomas, experiencias emocionales, geografías emocionales

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How to cite this article (APA, 7th ed.): Castro Mosqueda, H. (2025). The role of emotions in teacher agency: A study of Mexican English language educators. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 27(1), 67–82. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v27n1.114867>

This article was received on June 5, 2024 and accepted on October 22, 2024.

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Introduction

This study explores the emotional experiences of five Mexican English language teachers, focusing on the intersections between their personal lives, teaching practices, and emotional geographies. The rationale for this research lies in the historical marginalization of teachers' emotions in educational discourse, where they are often regarded as disruptive or insignificant. This oversight has created a gap in understanding the critical role emotions play in shaping teachers' professional identities and agency, especially in diverse contexts like Mexico, where emotional research in education is underrepresented.

The study aims to investigate how these emotional experiences influence teachers' agency in managing classroom dynamics and effecting positive changes. Data are analyzed through Hargreaves' (2001) emotional geography framework, using semi-structured interviews and written life stories. This framework examines how teachers' emotional experiences shape and are shaped by their sociocultural, moral, professional, physical, and political contexts, offering insights into how emotions interact with their roles and lives.

Despite increasing interest in the role of emotions in education (Jaggar, 1989; Oatley & Jenkin, 1996; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003), the link between emotions and agency remains underexplored, particularly in Mexico (Cong-Lem, 2021; Uitto et al., 2015). This study is novel in exploring the intersection of teacher emotions and agency in a context where such research is scarce. Applying Hargreaves' emotional geography framework provides a comprehensive analysis of how personal and professional dimensions shape teachers' experiences, challenging the historical neglect of emotions in educational research. The findings offer important insights for teacher education and policy, underscoring the importance of emotional awareness in effective teaching.

My analysis will be informed by my own experiences as a former immigrant and language learner, which

allows me to connect my journey with those of the participants. This perspective deepens the understanding of how emotional experiences influence teaching practices and professional identities. The findings offer important insights for teacher education and policy, underscoring the critical role of emotional awareness in effective teaching.

Literature Review

Research on the emotions of teachers and students in language education has explored various perspectives. Initially, the focus was on the relationship between cognition and emotion (Golombek, 2015; Swain, 2013; White, 2018). Subsequent studies expanded this view to include relational and social dimensions (Day & Qing, 2009; Zembylas, 2003, 2007) and investigated these emotions' sociopolitical and ideological foundations (De Costa et al., 2018).

Lantolf and Swain (2019) argue that Cartesian dualism, which separates cognition from emotion, overlooks how emotions significantly impact cognitive processes such as attention and memory. White (2018) and Swain (2013) emphasize integrating emotions into language education to enhance engagement and learning outcomes. Golombek (2015) discusses the influence of emotions on teacher education and cognitive processes, while Cheng (2021), MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012), and Richards (2022) address the adverse effects of emotional dissonance. Teacher anxiety and burnout are also significant concerns (Aydin, 2016; De Costa et al., 2018; Gómez-Domínguez et al., 2022; Nagamine, 2018; Tum, 2012, 2014).

From a sociocultural perspective, emotions are viewed as socially constructed and essential for understanding teachers' experiences (Nias, 1996; Zembylas, 2003, 2005). Cong-Lem (2023) highlights the role of emotions in psychological development and their sociocultural evolution. Benesch (2012, 2017, 2018), Loh and Liew (2016), and Wolff and De Costa (2017) examine how sociopolitical factors influence

teacher emotions, with Benesch noting the impact of high-stakes testing and Loh and Liew addressing performance culture.

Studies indicate that teacher emotions are crucial for agency and transformation (Benesch, 2018; Li et al., 2023; Miller & Gkonou, 2018; Nguyen & Ngo, 2023; Zembylas, 2003), motivating teachers to tackle challenges and improve practices. Xu et al. (2024) reviewed language teacher education research on teachers' emotions from 2004 to 2022. They observed a significant increase in publications during the COVID-19 pandemic, with over half of the 169 articles published between 2020 and 2022. The analysis identified the United States, China, Iran, the United Kingdom, and Turkey as leading contributors. Given that most research in this area has been conducted in these contexts, there is a pressing need for studies focusing on Mexico and Latin America. My study underscores the importance of interdisciplinary approaches and calls for further exploration of the emotional dynamics faced by language teachers in these underrepresented regions.

Contemporary Research on the Emotional Geography Framework

Liu (2016) investigated the emotional experiences of Wen, an immigrant ESL teacher in England, through her emotion diaries and interviews over three months, utilizing Hargreaves' emotional geography framework. Wen's management of emotions and adaptation to professional norms involved adjusting to independent work, balancing fairness with student needs, and navigating sociocultural pressures as a non-native speaker. Her professional distance from students and gradual integration into the community by finding her voice in meetings were critical to her adjustment. These challenges offered Wen deeper insights into the emotional and social dimensions of teaching in a new context. The study underscores the importance of addressing emotional dimensions in teacher development, particularly for immigrant educators, and advocates

for fostering positive emotions to enhance supportive work environments.

Rejeki et al. (2018) explored the emotional experiences of Pii, a male EFL teacher, during his assignment in the remote Asmat region of Papua, Indonesia. Applying Hargreaves' emotional geography framework, the study identifies physical, sociocultural, and professional challenges. Pii faced isolation and difficulties due to Asmat's challenging terrain, which led to fear and frustration. Cultural differences further complicated his teaching, with students' disruptive behavior linked to inter-village tensions. These issues profoundly affected his professional identity, revealing that passion alone was inadequate for navigating such a demanding environment. The study emphasizes the necessity of understanding teacher emotions, especially in challenging contexts where physical and cultural factors significantly impact teaching effectiveness.

Ubaidillah et al. (2023) examined the emotional experiences of Ike, an EFL teacher in Indonesia, during the transition to emergency remote teaching. Using narrative inquiry, the study highlights Ike's substantial emotional challenges, including frustration, despair, and discomfort, particularly at the onset of online teaching. These negative emotions were connected to difficulties in student engagement and adapting to new methods. However, institutional support, such as technical training, enabled Ike to convert these negative emotions into positive ones, fostering a more supportive teaching environment. The study also addresses how sociocultural changes in student behavior during remote learning influenced Ike's interactions and self-perception. It underscores the importance of recognizing and addressing teachers' emotions in critical situations to improve teaching practices and student outcomes.

Astutik and Hapsari (2022) explored Malika's emotional experiences as a preservice English teacher during her online teaching practicum amid the COVID-19 pandemic, using Hargreaves' emotional geography framework. Malika demonstrated emotional resilience in

adapting to online teaching despite feelings of overwhelm and anxiety. Her motivation fluctuated, improving with positive feedback but diminishing during challenges. These emotional experiences significantly shaped her professional identity, with successes in lesson planning enhancing her confidence. Malika's emotions also influenced her interactions with students and her supervisor, where positive emotions facilitated engagement and negative ones presented obstacles. By employing coping strategies, Malika managed her emotions, converting challenges into opportunities for growth. The study highlights the importance of understanding emotional geographies in online teaching to better support preservice teachers.

Ulya and Srisudarso (2023) investigated the emotional experiences of female preservice EFL teachers during their practicum in a limited face-to-face learning environment at an Indonesian university. The study identifies a spectrum of emotions, from tension and anxiety to happiness and gratitude, shaped by five key dimensions of emotional geography: physical/personal, socio-cultural, moral, professional, and political. The preservice teachers experienced anxiety due to their limited teaching experience but received support from mentors and students. They demonstrated empathy toward students' learning challenges, often engaging in casual dialogues to provide help. The study also reveals how blended learning environments and new regulations led to fatigue and despondency among preservice teachers. These findings emphasize the need to address emotional experiences in teacher education to support future educators' well-being and professional development.

Chen (2023), through emotional geography theory, explored the emotional experiences of expert English teachers in Chinese secondary schools, focusing on how their professional relationships influence emotions and identity. The study employs a narrative inquiry approach, analyzing data from semi-structured interviews, reflection journals, and classroom observations with two

expert teachers. Findings indicate that the teachers' emotions are shaped by five dimensions: sociocultural distance, political distance, professional distance, moral distance, and physical distance. Notably, political distance, influenced by Confucian hierarchical structures, affects relationships with students, parents, colleagues, and leaders. The interplay of these distances profoundly impacts teachers' professional identity and well-being. The study highlights the need for mutual understanding, recognition, and appropriate professional distance to foster positive emotional experiences among teachers.

Sulistiyo et al. (2023) examined the emotional experiences of Dhan, a preservice EFL teacher, during his practicum in an Indonesian primary school, using Hargreaves' emotional geography framework. The study reveals both positive and negative emotional experiences shaped by cultural differences, social interactions, and power dynamics. Dhan experienced isolation and frustration due to limited communication with colleagues and difficulties connecting with students, largely attributed to cultural norms. However, he developed strong relationships with students, leading to positive experiences. Despite feeling unrecognized by some colleagues, Dhan's enthusiasm for teaching and preparation was evident. The study underscores how cultural differences impact emotions and highlights the importance of effective communication strategies to bridge language barriers and enhance classroom interactions. Overall, it emphasizes the significance of emotional understanding in teaching and its impact on teachers' professional identity and effectiveness.

Recent Work on English Language Teachers' Emotions and Agency

Benesch (2018) investigated the intersection of feeling rules, emotional labor, and teacher agency in English language teaching through a post-structural discursive lens. Feeling rules are explicit or implicit guidelines that dictate which emotions individuals are expected to display in specific contexts, particularly in institutional

or workplace settings. The study focused on how English language teachers respond to institutional policies regarding plagiarism in student writing. Interviews with post-secondary English language teachers revealed resistance to the emotional expectations embedded in plagiarism policies. Rather than adhering to punitive approaches, teachers sought pedagogical solutions, challenging the prescribed emotional responses. The study highlighted how emotional labor emerged as teachers navigated the tension between their internal emotions and external expectations while addressing plagiarism. It emphasized the role of emotions as indicators of inequitable conditions within educational institutions and advocated for collaborative change. By examining how teachers managed feeling rules and engaged in emotional labor, the research illustrated the potential of emotions to signal and foster teacher agency, calling for a deeper understanding of the sociopolitical dimensions of emotions in shaping teaching practices and institutional policies.

Miller and Gkonou (2018) explored the interconnectedness of language teacher agency, emotional labor, and emotional rewards in tertiary-level English language programs. A qualitative study using questionnaires and interviews with language teachers uncovered prevalent emotions experienced during teaching and how teachers navigated these emotions with agency. The study highlighted the influence of discourses such as teaching-as-caring on emotional labor and agency in the classroom. It also examined how teachers perceived emotional rewards from student interactions and their impact on ethical self-formation. By emphasizing the relational nature of agency and the historical and social contexts influencing teachers' emotions and labor, the study advocated for a nuanced understanding of language teaching dynamics.

Tao et al. (2024) examined teachers' emotional experiences during the transition to online teaching at a Chinese university, focusing on how emotions influenced agency and teaching practices. The study

identified emotional trajectories ranging from anxiety to joy and found that teachers who took agentic actions—such as adapting teaching methods and effectively utilizing technology—experienced positive emotions and increased student engagement. The research, aligned with Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory, suggested positive emotions enhance emotional well-being and teaching effectiveness. It highlighted the importance of understanding the complex relationship between teacher emotions and agency, calling for further exploration of the long-term effects of emotional experiences on teaching and the interplay between emotions and agency. The study provided insights for supporting teachers in managing emotions, fostering agency, and improving online teaching practices.

Nguyen and Ngo (2023) investigated how tensions, emotions, and agency shaped the identities of Vietnamese preservice English teachers. Applying cultural-historical activity theory and using narrative frames and in-depth interviews during the participants' final TESOL year, the study revealed that tensions triggered emotions that motivated efforts to resolve these tensions and construct teacher identities. Addressing these tensions was essential for supporting preservice teachers' professional development and identity formation. The research underscored the complex dynamics of language teacher identity formation, emphasizing the roles of emotions, agency, and tensions. It highlighted the need to address these factors in language teacher education to support preservice teachers' growth and identity development.

Hökkä et al. (2023) explored the impact of emotions on agency in organizations, challenging the notion of workplaces as emotionally neutral environments. The study defined emotional agency as a learnable skill involving the management of personal and others' emotions, which affects professional effectiveness and is shaped by both individual and organizational factors. The article called for further research to validate emotional agency and its links to work engagement

and organizational climate, suggesting the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods. It emphasized the importance of emotional agency for enhancing workplace interactions and supporting organizational change.

Cong-Lem and Nguyen (2024) examined how dramatic events influence teacher agency using a framework combining *perezhivanie* and cultural-historical activity theory. They investigated how the experiences of two Vietnamese EFL educators, Daisy and Grace, shaped their professional agency. Daisy, a novice lecturer, experienced frustration with students' lack of retention of lesson content, leading her to modify her teaching strategies. Grace, an experienced educator, faced student reticence and adapted her methods by incorporating educational games. Both educators' emotional responses influenced their instructional practices, demonstrating the dynamic relationship between emotions and agency. The study highlighted the importance of reflective practices and adaptive strategies in managing classroom challenges and enhancing teaching effectiveness, contributing to theoretical models of teacher agency.

Method

This study employs emotional geographies as a theoretical framework to analyze EFL teachers' experiences. Hargreaves (2001) notes that emotional closeness or distance in educational contexts lacks universal standards and varies across cultures and circumstances. Emotional geographies encompass both physical and psychological dimensions, where individuals may feel close to distant loved ones while feeling distant from those nearby. Teachers actively shape these emotional landscapes through emotional labor, influenced by cultural and structural factors. The emotional geographies of teaching are intricate, culturally influenced, and involve both objective and subjective elements shaped by teachers and their environments.

This research adopts an interpretative approach, emphasizing qualitative and subjective analysis

(Dörnyei, 2007). Qualitative research involves interpretive practices such as field notes and interviews to understand phenomena in their natural context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). An interpretative approach aligns with qualitative methods, focusing on the meanings individuals attribute to phenomena (Hesse-Biber, 2010). Employing an "observer as participant" approach (Cohen et al., 2007), the study integrates teachers' life stories as primary data sources through narrative inquiry (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). Language learning histories provide retrospective accounts of past experiences (Benson, 2011), while semi-structured interviews, following Kvale and Brinkmann (2008), deepen insights into the participants' experiences.

Participants and Setting

The participants in this study consisted of five EFL educators employed at a language department within a public university in central Mexico. The participants included:

- Joel: Eighteen years of teaching experience, previously worked in African religious communities.
- Pedro: Holds a bachelor's degree in business administration and has taught English for four years.
- Karina: Holds a graduate degree in tourism and has taught English for two years.
- Gabriel: Holds an engineering degree in computer science and has taught English for five years.
- Beatriz: Currently studying for a bachelor's degree in teaching English and has taught English for four years.

All names used here are pseudonyms. Permission from the participants was secured prior to data collection. They were informed of the study's purpose, attended an orientation, and signed a consent form.

The excerpts used in the following section were coded using the initials of the participant's name, followed by the source of the data, which can be either semi-structured interviews (SI) or life stories (LS), along

with a number that refers to the specific interview or life story from which the comment originated. For example, “KarSI2” indicates that the comment was made by Karina during Interview 2.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection started with participants writing reflective narratives about their life stories, focusing on their language learning and teaching experiences. Participants were asked to detail their initiation into the teaching profession and describe significant career experiences. They maintained journals to record these life stories during their free time, whether at home or the university. This process spanned six months, with variability in the number of journal entries among participants.

Following the completion of the narratives, semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant to further explore their experiences and emotions. The interviews were designed to delve deeper into the events described in the narratives, allowing participants to elaborate on these stories. These interviews were held at the university facilities.

The collected data, including written narratives and interview transcripts, were then analyzed using Hargreaves’s emotional geographic framework. This

framework categorizes the emotional experiences into five dimensions: physical, moral, sociocultural, professional, and political geographies (see Table 1). This structured approach enabled the researcher to identify and label the various emotional elements in the participants’ stories, facilitating a nuanced understanding of their experiences in language teaching and learning.

Researcher Positionality

As a former immigrant and language learner, I share many of the life, learning, and teaching experiences of most participants in this study. This evokes in me a sense of respect and simultaneously influences the development of my identity, not only professionally but also personally.

Having learned English in both ESL and EFL contexts, I have also experienced situations that have elicited positive and negative emotions, ultimately leading me to where I am today. I now identify as a TESOL teacher educator in a teacher education institution and researcher of teacher education. I strive to serve as a guide for preservice teachers, helping them navigate the professional tensions they encounter in their practicum and initial teacher preparation programs.

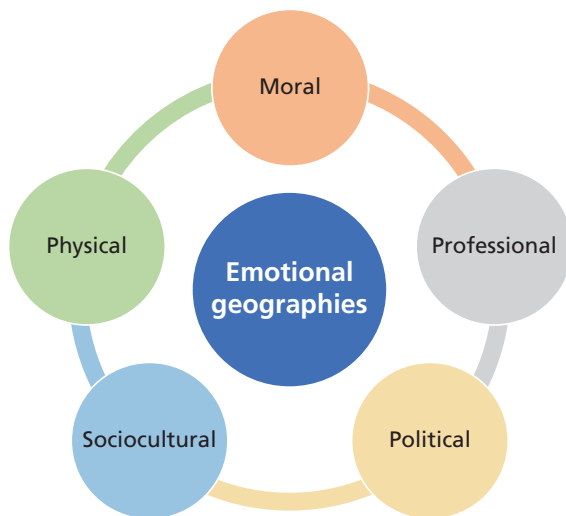
Table 1. Emotional Geographies of Teaching (Hargreaves, 2001)

Emotional geography	Description
Sociocultural geography	Refers to the influence of cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and values on emotional interactions between teachers and other agents
Moral geography	Involves the ethical considerations and values that may create emotional barriers or connections between teachers and other agents
Professional geography	Focuses on the boundaries and expectations set by professional roles and responsibilities that impact emotional dynamics in teacher-other-agent relationships
Physical geography	Relates to the spatial aspects and physical proximity between teachers and other agents, influencing emotional connections and understandings
Political geography	Considers power dynamics, hierarchies, and authority structures that shape emotional interactions and relationships between teachers and other agents

Findings

The excerpts presented in this section were chosen to identify situations that evoke emotions in language teachers. These situations are then linked to specific emotional geographies (Figure 1). Building on these findings, this section argues the importance of considering teachers' emotional experiences as influential factors in their professional development. By recognizing emotions as a significant component of language educator growth, we can enhance the professional development process and create more supportive learning environments.

Figure 1. Emotional Geographies (Hargreaves, 2001)



Moral Geography

Moral geography encompasses ethical considerations and values that can either create emotional barriers or foster connections between teachers and students. Two participants, Karina and Gabriel, shared experiences that exemplify the intersection of moral geography and emotional dynamics in the classroom.

Karina mentions: “Every time I see one of my students who doesn’t understand, they are my reflection, and I try to help them as I would have liked to have

been helped myself”¹ (KarSI2). This statement reflects Karina’s profound empathy and understanding toward her students. She sees her students’ struggles as reflections of her own and responds by offering the support she would have desired in a similar situation. This empathetic approach not only strengthens teacher–student relationships but also nurtures a supportive learning environment where students feel valued and understood. Karina’s empathy and kindness demonstrate her moral values and genuine concern for student well-being.

Gabriel also mentions the following:

Once, a girl challenged me in class, and I spoke to her loudly...at the end of the class, I talked to her and tried to reconcile the situation with her, explaining that certain things she did upset me. When I get worked up, afterward I reflect and say, that shouldn’t have happened. (GabSI3)

Gabriel recounts a classroom incident where conflict arose with a student, leading to a moment of raised voices. However, upon reflection, Gabriel acknowledges his emotional response and takes steps to address the situation. By explaining his feelings, expressing regret, and seeking reconciliation with the student, Gabriel demonstrates moral awareness, responsibility, and a commitment to bridging emotional divides. His actions highlight the importance of self-reflection, conflict resolution, and ethical decision-making in teacher–student interactions.

Having faced similar challenges as a former language learner in an English-speaking country where the absence of someone who spoke my language often left me feeling isolated, I developed a deep understanding of how emotional dynamics can influence both teaching and learning. This sense of despair now motivates me as a teacher educator to help my preservice students avoid similar feelings. By fostering an empathetic and supportive environment, I strive to ensure they feel

¹ The excerpts have been translated from Spanish for publication purposes.

understood and valued, enabling them to overcome the emotional barriers I once encountered. Analyzing the participants' experiences through the lens of moral geography provides valuable insights for enhancing language teacher development. By emphasizing empathy, ethical considerations, and effective conflict resolution strategies, the participants cultivated stronger emotional connections with their students, navigated moral dilemmas with integrity, and created a supportive and inclusive learning environment that promotes growth and well-being. Similarly, my own journey allows me to reflect on my experiences, enabling me to guide preservice teachers in their development. Ultimately, this enriched understanding not only enhances my professional growth but also improves the classroom experience for both myself and my students, fostering a community where emotional awareness is prioritized.

Professional Geography

Professional geography delves into the boundaries and expectations inherent in professional roles, shaping the emotional dynamics within teacher-student relationships and other interactions. Pedro and Gabriel's narratives shed light on the interplay between professional geography and emotional landscapes in educational settings.

Pedro wrote the following in one of his written life stories:

When I arrived in this city, I started work at the school in the middle of the semester, and [my colleague] did not like it because she already had her own scheme. She was relegating me . . . I simply did not exist. (PedLS1)

Pedro's account portrays a power struggle within the classroom, where his colleague's actions of marginalization and dismissal created a sense of professional distance and emotional isolation. By relegating and disregarding Pedro, his colleague asserted authority, reinforcing a hierarchical dynamic that impacted the emotional climate within the school. This exercise of

power underscores how authority relations can influence emotional landscapes, leading to feelings of isolation and frustration among students.

Gabriel mentioned: "My teachers spoke to me with profanity...when I remember this, I recall how I felt" (GabSI3). Pedro's and Gabriel's narratives illustrate how power struggles and authority can significantly impact emotional landscapes in educational settings. Pedro's experience of being marginalized by his teacher reflects a sense of isolation, as he stated, "I simply did not exist." This dismissal not only highlights the hierarchical dynamics at play but also underscores how such power imbalances can lead to feelings of neglect and vulnerability among teachers and students alike. Similarly, Gabriel's recollection of teachers using profanity illustrates an abuse of authority that compromises emotional well-being, evoking discomfort and undermining the supportive environment essential for student growth.

Reflecting on my own experiences in similar situations heightens my awareness of the impact my actions can have on students' emotions and the power imbalances in the classroom. By emphasizing ethical conduct and recognizing the emotional ramifications of professional behaviors, I can navigate complex relationships more effectively. Intertwining my experiences with those of Pedro and Gabriel allows me to better prepare my preservice teachers for their own challenges. This approach reinforces my commitment to their growth while fostering a classroom atmosphere that prioritizes emotional awareness and inclusion.

Political Geography

Political geography examines power dynamics, hierarchies, and authority structures that shape emotional interactions and relationships between teachers and other agents. Joel's and Beatriz's narratives illustrate the impact of political geography on emotional landscapes in educational settings.

Joel mentioned the following:

I shared my knowledge at first, always with the idea of impacting the student's life, but I faced a different reality. When I first came from Europe, I observed that our educational system was lagging. In Mexico, students are not taught to learn but to repeat, imitate, and do everything very superficially...there is no passion for studying. (JoeLS3)

Joel's account highlights a political disconnect between his aspirations to positively impact students' lives and the reality of encountering a flawed educational system. The emphasis on rote learning, superficial understanding, and lack of enthusiasm for studying in Mexico's educational system underscores systemic issues influenced by educational policies, governance, and decision-making processes. Joel's frustration with the system's neglect of effective learning and critical thinking reflects the emotional geography of political disconnect, where structural, institutional, and policy-related factors shape teachers' experiences and perceptions.

Beatriz also mentioned the following:

I have been working in that school for eight years, and we have never been considered for a tenure position... the school authorities talked about the importance of English in the Guanajuato context, but they have a double discourse as they do not support language teachers and the language department. (BeaLS4)

Beatriz expresses frustration and disillusionment over the lack of recognition and support from school authorities despite her long-term commitment and dedication. The gap between the rhetoric of valuing English language education and the absence of tangible support for language teachers illustrates a form of political disconnect, where stated priorities fail to align with actual actions within the educational institution. Beatriz's experience underscores how institutional practices and policies can foster feelings of powerlessness, marginalization, and emotional discordance among teachers who feel undervalued

and overlooked in terms of professional opportunities and advancement.

As a former immigrant in the American educational system, I faced animosity and power dynamics that complicated integration. This experience has heightened my sensitivity to how such factors influence the emotional landscape in education. Now, as a language teacher educator, I encounter challenges related to insufficient support for language teachers, with current policies often favoring fields like engineering over language education. Building solidarity among teachers facing similar challenges fosters collaboration for positive change. By connecting my experiences with those of my participants, I aim to equip preservice teachers with the tools to navigate these complexities, fostering inclusive environments that prioritize their well-being and success.

Sociocultural Geography

Sociocultural geography examines the influence of cultural backgrounds on emotional interactions between teachers and other agents. Pedro's and Joel's narratives illustrate the impact of sociocultural factors on emotional landscapes in educational settings.

Pedro mentioned the following: "Over time, I have realized that it is important to listen to the students...The thing is, the students also have their own situations, and they surely affect their performance" (PedSI1). Pedro's recognition of the importance of listening to students and considering their circumstances reflects an awareness of the sociocultural factors influencing academic performance. By acknowledging that students face unique challenges that may impact their learning, Pedro addresses the sociocultural gap between educators and learners, emphasizing the diversity of backgrounds and experiences among students. This attaches significance to recognizing and valuing students' cultural diversity, personal experiences, and social contexts in the learning process. Similarly, Joel's previously shown excerpt (JoeSL3) reveals how disillusionment can arise from the

contrast between his European professional background and the practices in the Mexican educational system. His frustrations illustrate the necessity for educators to be aware of sociocultural dynamics, which can shape perceptions and experiences in the classroom. Joel's observations about students' lack of enthusiasm may reflect a failure to appreciate the unique sociocultural nuances of their context, emphasizing the need for educators to recognize diverse experiences and values.

As an immigrant and language student in an English-speaking country, I have gained insight into how sociocultural factors influence students' performance and emotional well-being. This understanding enhances my empathy for my students and motivates me to tackle potential sociocultural issues in the classroom. Analyzing teachers' emotions about these disparities is crucial for strengthening student-teacher relationships. When educators recognize these differences, they can significantly improve their educational experience. This perspective is essential for guiding preservice teachers in fostering cultural awareness, sensitivity, and inclusion in language instruction. By connecting my experiences with those of my participants, I aim to enhance educational quality and student outcomes through shared learning, empowering future educators to create supportive environments that prioritize the emotional well-being of all students.

There were no comments from the participants that directly referenced physical geography. So, to sum up, the participants' narratives illustrate how moral geography fosters empathy and understanding, professional geography emphasizes ethical conduct and power dynamics, political geography underscores systemic issues and institutional disconnects, and sociocultural geography recognizes the importance of cultural diversity and personal experiences.

Discussion

This discussion will address three key issues: the interrelationship of the emotional geography frame-

work, the connection of the study's findings with prior research, and the implications for second language teacher education.

Interrelationship of Emotional Geographies

The emotional geographies of language teachers—moral, professional, political, and sociocultural—are deeply interconnected, shaping their experiences and professional growth. Moral geography plays a crucial role in fostering empathy and ethical decision-making. For instance, Karina's and Gabriel's reflections demonstrate how moral considerations strengthen teacher-student relationships and create supportive learning environments. This moral awareness is closely linked to professional geography, where power dynamics and expectations influence emotional interactions. Pedro's feelings of isolation, resulting from dismissive behavior by a colleague, highlight how professional conduct can significantly impact emotional well-being.

Political geography further complicates these dynamics by exposing systemic issues that shape teachers' emotional landscapes. Joel's and Beatriz's experiences reveal how institutional disconnects and lack of support lead to frustration and disillusionment, negatively affecting their moral and professional engagements. These political challenges often hinder teachers' ability to foster positive emotional connections with students.

Sociocultural geography underscores the importance of recognizing students' diverse backgrounds and personal circumstances, as emphasized by Pedro's insights on listening to students. This awareness can bridge emotional gaps caused by professional and political challenges, promoting a more inclusive and empathetic classroom environment. In summary, emotional geographies are intertwined: moral geography enhances relational dynamics, professional geography shapes emotional climates, political geography

reveals systemic challenges, and sociocultural geography highlights the importance of diversity. Together, these dimensions provide a comprehensive framework for understanding and improving language teacher development and the emotional experiences that shape teachers' practice.

As a researcher with the background already described, I share many life experiences with the participants in this study. This connection deepens my respect for their journeys and informs my understanding of the emotional dynamics at play. Having navigated both ESL and EFL contexts myself, I recognize the positive and negative emotions that arise in educational settings. My goal is to guide preservice teachers through these complexities, helping them develop cultural awareness and empathy while fostering inclusive environments that prioritize student well-being. By intertwining my positionality with the narratives of participants like Karina, Gabriel, Pedro, Joel, and Beatriz, I aim to enhance educational quality and empower future educators to create supportive classrooms that embrace diversity.

Connection to Prior Research

The findings of this study align with existing research on teacher emotions, particularly the intricate relationship between emotion and cognition. Swain (2013) and Golombek (2015) argue that emotions are integral to cognitive processes, impacting attention, memory, and decision-making. This study supports these claims, as participants reported that their emotional states directly influenced their classroom engagement and effectiveness. For example, Karina's empathetic approach aligns with White's (2018) assertion that positive emotions enhance student interactions and learning outcomes.

However, the study also challenges the binary categorization of emotions as strictly positive or negative, as Cheng (2021) and MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) suggested. Participants often experienced emotional

dissonance, such as Pedro's simultaneous feelings of isolation and commitment to teaching, challenging the view that negative emotions are solely detrimental to teaching effectiveness. This complexity is reflected in Ubaidillah et al. (2023), who argue that negative emotions can lead to transformative experiences when supported by institutional resources.

The findings align with Benesch (2018) and Loh and Liew (2016), who emphasize the role of institutional structures in shaping teacher emotions. Gabriel's account of teachers using profanity illustrates how the abuse of power can erode trust and respect in the classroom. Such behavior not only diminishes the integrity of the educational environment but also raises significant ethical concerns. The use of profanity by educators contradicts the profession's ethical standards, undermining the respect and model of appropriate conduct that teachers are expected to uphold. This issue reflects broader systemic problems discussed by Benesch (2018) and Loh and Liew (2016), who argue that institutional failures and lack of support exacerbate emotional challenges for teachers. This connection underscores the urgent need to address institutional impacts and ethical implications on teacher well-being, as Cochran-Smith et al. (2022) highlighted in their call for transformative agency in education.

Furthermore, participants expressed a strong sense of moral obligation and ethical considerations in their teaching, mirroring Ubaidillah et al. (2023), who emphasized the role of institutional support in mitigating negative emotions during challenging transitions. This study underscores the necessity of addressing these emotional dimensions to foster supportive educational environments.

The analysis extends the discourse on teacher agency, as highlighted by Miller and Gkonou (2018) and Nguyen and Ngo (2023). Participants demonstrated agency by navigating their emotional experiences and adapting their teaching strategies in response to challenges. This aligns with findings from Xu et al.

(2024), which identify a growing body of research on the relationship between emotions and agency. The relevance of this study is particularly significant in regions where teacher emotions have been less explored, further supported by Xu et al.'s identification of leading contributors to this field.

Implications for Second Language Teacher Education

The findings from this study have several implications for second language teacher education. Teacher education programs should integrate emotional geography frameworks to help future educators understand the emotional dimensions of teaching and develop effective emotion management strategies. Educational institutions must recognize teachers' emotional challenges and provide support systems, such as mentoring and professional development focused on emotional well-being. Encouraging reflective practices in teacher education can foster self-awareness and resilience, enabling educators to explore and navigate their emotional experiences effectively.

Education programs should emphasize emotional intelligence, equipping teachers with the skills to manage their emotions and those of their students. Addressing the moral and ethical dimensions of teaching is crucial for helping educators handle the emotional complexities of their responsibilities. Teacher education should also empower educators to exercise their agency in creating equitable practices and environments, encouraging them to challenge institutional constraints and advocate for their students' needs.

Professional development should foster critical awareness of the sociopolitical contexts in which teachers operate, along with training that helps them identify and challenge inequitable practices. Creating collaborative networks among educators can facilitate sharing strategies and resources, enabling teachers to advocate for their students and promote inclusive practices. By equipping teachers with the necessary tools

and support to navigate their emotional landscapes, educational institutions can enhance their effectiveness as agents of change, ultimately improving their students' learning experiences.

This study emphasizes the importance of understanding the emotional dynamics that shape educators' experiences and their implications for professional development and well-being.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study reveals the intricate connections between the moral, professional, political, and sociocultural dimensions of language teachers' emotional geographies. These interconnected aspects significantly shape teachers' experiences, growth, and agency, emphasizing the complexity of their emotional landscapes. The findings align with existing literature on emotion and cognition while challenging simplistic views of emotions as purely positive or negative.

Madalińska-Michalak and Bavli (2018) and Reeves (2022) emphasize the critical need for teacher education programs to incorporate the emotional aspects of teaching. From my own experiences and interactions with participants, it is evident that equipping educators with tools for emotional intelligence and reflective practices is essential. By recognizing the importance of emotional geography and agency, we can foster inclusive learning environments that support both teacher well-being and student outcomes. Ultimately, I believe that prioritizing these elements in teacher education is not just beneficial but necessary for preparing educators to navigate the emotional complexities of their profession effectively.

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